

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00611 021648Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----089993 021653Z /41
O 021534Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 406

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 611

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USDEL NO 46

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH RABBI ARTHUR HERZBERG

1. RABBI ARTHUR HERZBERG, WHO WAS HERE TO ATTEND THE WORLD
ZIONIST CONGRESS AND HAS BEEN HAVING A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS
WITH VARIOUS ISRAELI OFFICIALS, PASSED ON THE FOLLOWING TO ME
BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. HERZBERG EMPHASIZED THE SENSITIVITY
OF HIS DOING SO, AND WE MUST SCRUPULOUSLY PROTECT HIM.

2. IN A CONVERSATION WITH HAIM LANDAU, MINISTER WITHOUT
PORTFOLIO AND BEGIN INTIMATE, THE LATTER SAID THAT THE GOI,
WAS EXPECTING THE USG TO PUT FORWARD A PROPOSED TEXT OF THE
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES INCORPORATING PRESIDENT CARTER'S
ASWAN LANGUAGE AND WAS ASSUMING THAT THE USG WOULD LEAK
THIS AT SOME POINT. HE (LANDAU) WOULD BE PRECEDING BEGIN TO
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THE UNITED STATES TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR TAKING THE
USG ON, BASING THE ISRAELI CASE ON THE ARGUMENT THAT THERE
WAS NO VALID ARAB CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK AND
GAZA. HAIM QUOTED LANDAU AS SAYING ISRAEL WAS PREPARED "TO
FACE THE MUSIC" AND HAVE A SHOWDOWN WITH US ON THIS ISSUE."

3. HERZBERG ALSO SAID THAT PRESIDENT KATZIR HAD TOLD HIM HE

DID NOT EXPECT BEGIN TO BEND ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT THIS
COULD LEAD TO CABINET CHANGES.

4. HERZBERG SAID HE HAD MET WITH GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICERS
FROM THE MILITARY STAFF COLLEGE AND HAD PROBED HARD TO FIND
OUT THEIR JUDGMENT ABOUT WHAT ISRAEL'S MINIMUM REQUIRE-
MENTS WOULD BE FROM A SECURITY POINT OF VIEW ON THE WEST BANK.
THE CONSENSUS OF THAT GROUP WAS THAT ISRAELI SECURITY CONCERNS
COULD BE SATISFYING IF WEST BANK WERE DEMILITARIZED WITH JORDANIAN
FORCES PERFORMING POLICE FUNCTION AND ISRAEL RETAINING A FEW
SOPHISTICATED WATCH STATIONS ON THE HILLS IN THE WEST BANK.
IT WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED THAT THE WATCH STATIONS WERE THERE
WITHOUT ANY TIME LIMIT OR, TO SAVE ARAB FACE, UNTIL "FULL
PEACE" HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF THIS GROUP
OF MILITARY OFFICERS, HERZBERG SAID, WAS TO BE IN A POSITION
TO DETECT THREATS OF MAJOR MILITARY ACTION. THEY RECOGNIZED
THIS WAS NOT A SAFEGUARD AGAINST TERRORIST ACTIVITY BUT INDICATED
THEY COULD LIVE WITH SUCH "PIN PRICKS."

5. HERZBERG GAVE AS HIS PERSONAL JUDGMENT THAT BEGIN CANNOT
SHOW SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY ON WEST BANK ISSUES TO MAKE PEACE
SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE THAT, IF HE CONTINUES IN OFFICE, THERE
WILL BE MAJOR US-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION. HERZBERG SAID THAT
AS BOTH AN AMERICAN JEW AND A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL,
SUCH A CONFRONTATION WITH THE REPERCUSSIONS IT WOULD HAVE
ON THE FABRIC OF AMERICAN SOCIETY WAS HIS GREATEST FEAR.

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HIS URGENT PLEA WAS THAT THE USG MANAGE ITS DEALINGS WITH
BEGIN SO AS NOT TO "BRUTALIZE HIM," WHICH WOULD ONLY CONSOLIDATE
SUPPORT FOR BEGIN IN ISRAEL; THE USG MUST FIND WAYS TO GO THE
EXTRA MILE IN ORDER THAT IT WILL BE SEEN AS THE REASONABLE
PARTY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, WEST BANK, SUPPLIES, PETROLEUM, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, PEACE TALKS, MEETING REPORTS, MEETINGS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PEACE PLANS, NEGOTIATIONS, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 3-2-78
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JERUSA00611
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: HR IS ALSO ST, FOR S/S TARNOFF--DISTRIBUTE TO SECRETARY ONLY, FURTHER DISTRIBUTION AT SECRETARY'S DISCRETION
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850056-2547, N780003-0195
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803115/aaaaduan.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4ee23dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3143920
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH RABBI ARTHUR HERZBERG
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US, SOPN, PEPR, ENRG, IS, EG, XF, US, (HERZBERG, ARTHUR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ee23dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

